



Lexington Community Farm Operational/Site Plan September 5, 2013

I. Hours of Operation

Field Operation

The fields will be operational year round during daylight hours.

Farm Stand

The farm stand operated as Busa Farm is currently open seven days a week from April to early November from 9 am to 6 pm. We can foresee a future in which Lexington Community Farm's stand would eventually be open year-round, seven days a week. We also anticipate extending hours at the farm stand to later than 6 pm to accommodate more customers after work. Reduced hours are likely during the initial years of the Community Farm and during off-peak months (mid-November through March).

Deliveries and Pickup

Any deliveries or pickups will be scheduled for between 7 am and 6 pm.

U-Pick

U-Pick will be open during (daylight) farm stand hours.

II. Products for Sale

Farm related Products

The farm stand will enable residents who are not CSA members to purchase produce grown on the Community Farm and possibly Dennis Busa's popular corn, grown at the Waltham St. Fields conservation property in Lexington. In addition, we propose offering additional local agricultural products including locally produced vegetable seedlings and bedding plants, vegetables, flowers, fruits, honey, maple and apple syrups, meat, and dairy products for sale at the farm stand. We also propose continuing the Cape Ann Fresh Catch seafood share that currently uses the site as a pickup location. We plan to reach out to local producers of high-quality products such as Lexington's own Wilson Farms, to explore opportunities to offer specialty and prepared food products.

Note: Lexington Community Farm will adhere to the Food Protection Program Policies, Procedures and Guidelines issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for Farmers Markets for all farm-related products. This will likely include obtaining a Retail Food Permit for the sale of processed foods.

Non-farm related Products

In the future, we would also like to offer organic garden supplies and tools, and educational materials to assist and encourage sustainable food production among home gardeners and residents with community garden plots. We also plan to use a small portion of the farm stand as a storefront for LexFarm-branded products such as t-shirts, hats, totebags and other non-food items to support our nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

III. Farming Practices

Note: The farm operation at Lexington Community Farm will be managed by Community Farms Outreach (CFO), an organization that has been doing business as Waltham Fields Community Farm for nearly 20 years. All descriptions below to CFO and Waltham Fields Community Farm are intended to convey a description of continuing these same practices at Lexington Community Farm.

Anticipated crops to be cultivated

Lexington Community Farm plans to grow only organic vegetables, vegetable starts, flowers, flower starts, and bedding plants. We may also produce small quantities of berries and small fruits for U-Pick or educational purposes. Small quantities of livestock of an appropriate scale for the site and the town, including chickens, goats and bees, may also be integrated into the production plan in later years, although there are no immediate plans to do so.

Composting Plan

We plan to create agricultural compost areas at the farm in order to conserve nutrients produced on the farm, lower the risk of nitrogen pollution of ground and surface water by stabilizing it in an organic form, and reduce input costs for the farm operation by generating compost as a soil conditioner for the farm. Most crop residues will be composted in the field by flail chopping and incorporation. However, harvested crops that are not appropriate for donation to food pantries, along with other organic waste products and possibly food, leaves, or organic landscape materials waste diverted from the waste stream by responsible commercial partners, will be made into aerobic compost windrows on the farm site. The site for compost production must be at least 250 feet from the farm's well, 100 feet from the Reservoir, and 250 feet from the nearest residence with adequate visual buffers to minimize the impact on the viewshed as stipulated by Mass DEP. High-quality composting methods will reduce the risk of nuisance complaints about odor and flies. The amount of compost that can be made at the farm will be determined by the amount of space available for composting after the farm plan is generated, since adequate room for both material and vehicle operation must be provided in order to ensure the optimum performance of the compost pile.

Practices to minimize or eliminate the use of any synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers

As an established organic farm, Waltham Fields Community Farm has many years of experience producing high yields of high-quality crops without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides. We plan to continue the practices that allow this type of

production at Lexington Community Farm, with the use of a conservation plan focusing on transitioning to organic production (see below).

These practices include the use of cover crops and compost to build soil organic matter and soil health; the use of targeted amounts of organic fertilizers to add specific nutrients as necessary based on crop nutrition budgets and annual soil tests; the use of organically approved biodegradable mulches to reduce tillage, limit weed growth and minimize soil erosion and nutrient runoff; wise and safe integration of appropriately-scaled livestock to add nutrients and reduce pests; crop rotation; using physical cultivation techniques, flame weeding, mulching, and hand weeding and hoeing to reduce weed populations over time; scouting for pests and using available technological resources to predict pest hatch and flight and adjusting planting dates accordingly; protecting and enhancing natural controls for pests; and utilizing appropriate biological, cultural and physical controls before applying organic pesticides according to their label as a last resort when economic thresholds for crop damage have been reached.

LexFarm and CFO are committed to organic production methods for environmental reasons as well as for the safety of our farmers, employees, neighbors, and customers. Waltham Fields Community Farm adheres to the NOFA-NY Farmer's Pledge as the backbone of its production practices and look forward to continuing these practices at Lexington Community Farm.

Practices to prevent soil erosion, promote the soil health and the accumulation of organic matter

We look forward to working with the USDA NRCS EQIP (United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program) program to create a conservation plan for the Lexington Community Farm property that includes a plan for transition to organic production, establishing boundaries and buffer zones to protect water quality, improving soil quality and organic matter while minimizing erosion, improving pest management, developing a grazing plan and improving grazing resources for any livestock on the farm, improving waste utilization and composting, improving irrigation efficiency, enhancing cropping systems and nutrient management, and addressing air quality and on-farm energy production as possible.

The EQIP program offers financial assistance for agricultural producers to implement Best Management Practices for environmental quality enhancement, and we are particularly excited to create such a plan because of Lexington Community Farm's proximity to both residential property and the Arlington Reservoir. While the conservation plan is in process, we plan to continue our basic organic management practices, including promoting soil health and organic matter increase through cover cropping, the addition of compost, and reducing tillage appropriately over time through the use of mulches and long-term weed management. A winter cover crop will be put in place on all land not in active cropping.

Storage plan for fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides

Lexington Community Farm will use only organic practices. Any organic pesticides will be stored in a locked metal cabinet clearly labeled as pesticide storage. Appropriate WPS (Worker Protection Standards) signage, training and personal protective equipment will be

available for workers. Since very small amounts of organic pesticides will be used on the farm, a single metal cabinet should suffice to store all necessary pesticides for the season. This cabinet will also contain pesticide application records and an inventory of all the on hand organic pesticide materials. Granular organic fertilizers will be stored on wooden pallets inside a building or greenhouse area that is clearly labeled, easily accessed, and off-limits to the public. Liquid organic fertilizers will be stored in their original containers within a catchment container that can hold 125% of their original capacity. Fire extinguishers will be available in the fertilizer storage room at all times, and the storage area will not have a drain or other access to a water supply. An inventory of all on-hand organic fertilizers will be kept and updated as fertilizers are used.

IV. Building Use and Improvements

Existing Buildings

Lexington Community Farm plans to continue the current use of the existing farm stand structure, pump house, greenhouse, hoophouse and parking area. The condition of the farmstand and connected refrigeration area and produce washing area is in immediate need of repairs. We plan to perform structural repairs, including replacing the roof as soon as possible. Repairs and improvements in the short term may include removal of the overhanging front area.

New Structures

Educational programs and associated public gatherings will require some protection from the elements. A place to gather and sit in the shade or out of the rain will be essential. For this reason, we expect to build a roofed structure in an area easily accessible to the public. We will likely re-locate and make use of the small shaded hoophouse currently attached to the farmstand for such a gathering area in the short term.

Utilities

There is no public water or sewer service to the property. There is an Artesian well that is sufficient for irrigation and for washing produce. Since it is cost prohibitive for us to provide the hookup to public water and sewer, in the near term we will do our best to provide basic on-site sanitation for use by workers and the public given this constraint. A likely initial solution is to lease a portable sanitary facility. If there continues to be no water/sewer as the community farm develops, we will investigate alternatives to the portable option, such as composting toilets like the ones sited at many outdoor parks in the area, including Walden Pond and Drumlin Farm.

These options, however, are far from ideal. One of the principal goals of Lexington Community Farm is to provide an education center for all ages to satisfy the tremendous public interest in farm-based education. We believe that to meet the programming demand adequately and serve the public, the facility should connect to Town sewer and Town water so that we can provide proper sanitation with toilets and sinks for public use.

Should these utilities be provided by the Town, it would be enable consideration of a structure to house a farm-based education center. Ideally, this building would serve multiple

needs, including office space, public meeting space, and potentially storage of farm supplies and equipment.

Even without a new facility, we believe the community farm and the public will be best served by providing the adequate sanitation afforded by access to public water and sewer. Even without a new facility, we believe the community farm and the public will be best served by public water and sewer.

V. Locations of Parking, Drives and Walkways

Parking

The public will park exclusively in the existing parking area. Farm staff will park either in the lot or in a designated area adjacent to the farm stand. Motorized farm vehicles will be stored in appropriate designated areas near the existing structures. No vehicles will be parked in the parking lot overnight.

Driveway

To address the encroachment of the current driveway on the abutting neighbor's property at 48 Lowell St, to the south of the farm stand, we will relocate the driveway to the north side of the farm stand. We plan to relocate the hoophouse currently attached to the north side of the farm stand in order to accommodate the relocation of the driveway. Those requiring access to the farm property will drive to the rear of the farm stand and connect to the existing drive.

Walking Paths

With the exception of the driveway described above, the existing pathways on the farm property will be preserved to allow movement of farm vehicles and safe pedestrian passage through the farm. During the first year of operation, we will design improvements to walking paths, taking into consideration planned educational and gathering spaces for the public. There are currently no paths on the farm property that connect to neighboring conservation land or the surrounding neighborhood. We plan to add such a connection in the form of a walking path in collaboration with the Greenways Corridor Committee to connect the new ACROSS Lexington trail system to the farm's pathways. This will integrate the farm into the Town's efforts to promote foot and bicycle transportation. Additional recreational elements and assistive accommodations may be added over time.

Note: Trail improvement will not include introducing any new material such as gravel or crushed stone on the path so as to protect the farmland and nearby conservation land.

Lexington Community Farm's pathways will be open to the neighborhood and the general public. However, we also recognize that the entry points to the farm and the pathways are directly adjacent to private homes. The farm itself is in the middle of a suburban neighborhood. We plan to work with the Community Farming Committee to establish appropriate signage and instructions to the public at entry points to the farm and pathways in order to protect the production fields as well as the abutting neighbors' sense of security.

VI. Safety and Security

Securing Property

The farm buildings will be locked during non-business hours. Hazardous materials (e.g., fuel oil), farm implements, and office equipment will be kept inside or in locked cabinets. Mechanized equipment will be immobilized and keys stored in a secure location.

A gate or chain will be installed at the entrance of the parking lot that will be locked overnight to prevent public parking overnight.

Lighting

Lexington Community Farm will initially rely on existing lighting for the interior of the farm stand and other structures. Outdoor lighting will be the minimal required for parking and public safety in the parking area during non-daylight hours of operation.

Entrance and Parking

The current parking area is directly adjacent to the busy Lowell Street and is without any barriers or other means of slowing traffic turning into the area. Further, there is no buffer area between the area where cars are parked and the entrance to the farm stand for pedestrians. To address these safety issues, we are currently evaluating and may implement one or more of the following solutions:

- (1) a low fence to enclose the perimeter of the parking area, that will prevent cars from entering pedestrian-only areas, including the area directly in front of the farm stand.
- (2) creating entry/exits significantly reduced from the current open area of approximately 75 linear feet along Lowell St. This will result a slowing of traffic in order to enter the site.
- (3) replacing the asphalt/pavement of the current parking area with $\frac{3}{4}$ " pebbles/stone. This will slow all vehicles entering and parking in the area. It will also promote good drainage.
- (4) signage to help control speed and access in and out of the parking area, e.g., 3 mph, "Go Slow: Children", etc.

VII. Abutter and Neighbor Concerns

Motorized farm equipment

We plan to use a variety of appropriately-sized motorized farm equipment on the site, including but not limited to tractors, tillage equipment, trucks, cultivation equipment, irrigation pumps, tractor-operated sprayers, mowers, greenhouse fans and blowers, and weed whackers.

Hours of operation of mechanical equipment

Hours of mechanical equipment operation will be limited to between 6:30 AM and 7 PM, with the exception of greenhouse fans and blowers and irrigation needed for frost control or crop protection during droughts. We recognize that the farm is in the middle of a residential

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neighborhood and will make every effort to ensure that noise does not reach a level that could be considered excessive or unwarranted as described in the Town's Noise Control by-law, Exemption §80-5 (farming) notwithstanding.

Organic Practices

As described above, Lexington Community Farm will use fully organic practices and will not use synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or any other inorganic substances in its farming operation. This means that neighbors do not need to be concerned about airborne or ground leeching of chemicals in their local environment as a result of Lexington Community Farm's operation. This also means that Lexington Community Farm will not be growing crops that typically require pesticide use, such as sweet corn. Any product sold at the farm stand that may have had pesticide application will have been grown elsewhere, and will be marked as such.

Visual barriers

Lexington Community Farm will maintain visual barriers for all trash cans and compost piles. We will ensure that all compost piles are well-managed so that they do not smell or attract flies or other vermin. We will generally ensure that the farm is maintained in a neat, orderly and aesthetically pleasing manner.

Communication

We will take annual surveys of abutters to determine what issues may be of concern. We will also make clear that we have an open-door policy for conversations with neighbors about any farming practices. These surveys and all conversations will help determine important areas for improvement each year.